

Homelessness Task and Finish Group – Responses

Date Received	From	Comments
17 August 2022	A	Great support from Ben Bradshaw who could not have been more helpful, some 8 years ago.
18 August 2022	B	<p>My name is..... I was made homeless in 2020. As the decision was not mine to make, the council had a duty of care to house me. After a 6 month stint an a difficult emotionally challenging and questionably ethical rehab unit in north Devon called Crosscombe Barton, run by a religious organisation “freedom ministries” associated with Hillsong church, I was discharged and brought myself back to Devon. As the duty of care act was still active, I was placed in Temporary accommodation in The Haven, a house that supported my recovery. I stayed there for over a year, until I was rehoused in a very nice one bedroom property in Pinhoe.</p> <p>I am one of the lucky ones. I count my gratitude every day. But there are plenty that are not so fortunate. I know of two individuals, who have learning difficulties, and probably disabilities, though due to the framework of the disability discrimination act, these individuals have found themselves, with no roof, save a pod to sleep in, and no means to find employment.</p> <p>I too, due to recent diagnosis missed as a child, have found myself both as ADHD and Autistic, along with dyslexia and dyscalculia. I too, don’t know how to fit into the world of work, and because the benefit system is, for ND’s Neuro Divergent unfair and unfit and to be blunt, discriminatory, against individuals like myself, I find that I’m in no position to know what to do next.</p> <p>I don’t blame the council for this. It is not the local council’s fault that the legislation of this nation has been penned by cackhanded individuals, who look no further than the next five years, where they can then cause more damage, while serving themselves up with more coin that they don’t deserve. The problem is a national one. ND’s need recognition. We need to be given the same respect as those who are defined as disabled, yet cannot, for reasons associated with our conditions function in a society simply unable to understand our needs.</p> <p>It isn’t right, that the disabled and the mentally infirm are forced to live on the streets, because of a poorly considered and constructed peice of legislation means the government, local and national, can then brush under the carpet the needs of individuals like myself. I’m 55. I want to work. I want to earn a crust in a contracted job that lasts a week,</p>

	<p>that isn't bound by zero terms and help to contribute to society. Hell I'd even go to university and study if I could. But there is no support: none.</p> <p>I will say that both the Clocktower medical team, and colab next to it, together with other services, do outstanding work. I think if closer ties were made to 12 step anonymous groups, then the work given would ease.</p> <p>Homelessness isn't just about addiction, though addiction does enter the lives of many who are homeless.</p> <p>Homelessness is about finding space for individuals to feel safe. It needs, not just local council support. It needs support from all parties who have both experienced homelessness, been affected by homelessness, and who are discriminated into homelessness, because they are seen as an overburden to the state. They are not a burden. They are citizens, and have as much right to the same entitlements as anyone else.</p> <p>In conclusion, the state, national and local has a duty of care to understand the needs of the homeless, because that is what makes a society civilised.</p> <p>I expect many others will say, homelessness has always been a problem, and so has poverty; to have rich people, you need poor people to show how rich the rich are.</p> <p>My argument against this is that in a time when far too many student flats are being built, when houses stand vacant in areas such as Pinhoe and are not being bought up by housing associations, when homelessness is on the increase because people cannot afford to pay the rent because of rising inflation greed and profit; then there is a solution to homelessness. It's just not being acted upon.</p> <p>In considering addiction alongside homelessness, I personally think the Swiss model is worth considering. Which is a recognition at a national level that the addict is an unwell individual and needs health care and treatment.</p> <p>Addiction, or dependency upon a chemical substance, in relation to mental health, is vitally important. It needs not just one service but many services working with each other to support the individuals the most. It needs alternative places for those in recovery to meet: an alcohol free late night bar and coffee house. Other nations have them, why not us? It needs council street workers, police, social services, and health care professionals all to work together, to keep these people safe. Because they are not. A man was raped at 5 am on the grounds of Sidwell streets church recently. As far as I am aware, his assailants are still at large.</p> <p>My recovery began, with a recognition of trauma. It began alone in dealing with it, in working a program, in getting to rooms, in prayer and meditation: and yeah I'm still on the waiting list to have a mental health support worker. It's a tough lifestyle. But a noble one. It means a lot of self love;</p>
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